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R-3480/1

East European Military Reliability

An Émigré-Based Assessment (Annex) (U)

Alexander Alexiev and A. Ross Johnson
With the assistance of Barbara Kliszewski

October 1986

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PREFACE (U)

☐ This classified Annex to RAND Report R-3480, *East European Military Reliability: An Emigre-Based Assessment*, by Alexander Alexiev and A. Ross Johnson, with the assistance of Barbara Kliszewski, October 1986, (1) explains the use of U.S. government intelligence reports as a supplement to the RAND interview database generated for the study, (2) compares our findings with those of earlier classified studies and appraisals, and (3) briefly notes the relevance of selected respondent testimony to Western policy studies that explore ways of reducing NSWP reliability.

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EAST EUROPEAN MILITARY RELIABILITY:
AN EMIGRE-BASED ASSESSMENT (ANNEX) (U)

(U) INTELLIGENCE DATA ON RELIABILITY

[] Emigre and defector debriefings conducted in U.S. government (USG) channels are generally focused on "harder" issues than those examined in this study, although some of those reports provide data on the various factors of reliability and unreliability examined in Sections II through V of R-3480. A review of all USG debriefings and other intelligence materials available for use in this project has produced no data that contradict or significantly correct the data obtained through the RAND interviews. Those materials, however, do provide some independent corroborative data.¹ Thus more attention to some "soft" factors in official debriefings may be warranted to provide additional inputs to reliability assessments.

[] USG debriefings contain a few defector estimates of reliability that supplement our respondents' views (presented in Section VI of R-3480). The USG reports stress unreliability more than do our

¹ [] For example, a junior [] officer [] provided information on the tensions between officers, on the one hand, and conscripts and reserve junior officers, on the other, under martial law [] testified to his commander's readiness to resist a Soviet invasion [] and a Soviet visit to Air Force headquarters [] in which [] officers were accused of potential disloyalty, just as they were in the case we described in Section IV of R-3480 [] provided a detailed picture of problems involving alcohol and drug abuse in the Polish army (DIA IIR 5-316-0327-85 []

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respondents, probably because estimates in debriefings are generally offered in the abstract. When applied to a specific military context, the implications for reliability in USG reports seem in line with the views of our respondents.

[] For example, the [] in the late 1960s maintained that NSWP troops are basically unreliable but would march because they would have no way to desert as long as an advance was successful. Massive desertions could result, however, if Soviet forces retreated. In the view of this Czechoslovak officer, the Soviets did not have high confidence in the reliability of any of their allies; they judged the Bulgarians and East Germans to be the most reliable, followed by the Poles, Hungarians, Romanians, and Czechoslovaks.²

[] Occasional reports from Soviet sources also provide some indication of Soviet appraisals of NSWP reliability. A Soviet serviceman maintained that in the Soviet army, "all allies were viewed with various degrees of distrust," except for the Bulgarians, who were considered fully reliable. The NPA and the PPA (prior to but not after mid-1980) were considered reliable; the Hungarians and the CPA were considered mostly reliable; and Romania was considered unreliable.³

[] In conversations with Western officials, Soviets have openly disparaged the reliability of the Romanian armed forces⁴ and the "fascist" character of the East Germans.⁵

² (U) []

³ (U) []

[] Vasily Kulish, Department of State Cable, Moscow 29802, December 6, 1978 (Secret).

⁵ (U) USMLM, DIA IIR 2-215-2644-79, November 28, 1979 (Confidential).

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(U) **USG AND NATO APPRAISALS OF NSWP RELIABILITY**

(U) We could locate only a handful of classified studies on NSWP reliability. These studies parallel the unclassified literature on East European military reliability reviewed in Section I of R-3480. The most extensive classified work remains a 1972 U.S. Army study that analyzes some of the same factors contributing to and detracting from reliability that are examined in the present RAND study.⁶

(U) The Army study concludes that the NPA would "respond to a call by the Warsaw Pact or Soviet Union for hostile action against the West and would be particularly effective in the short run. [Its] reliability in a longer duration conflict, or one in which setbacks were experienced, might deteriorate." The study states that a "liberation" attempt by the FRG would be misunderstood, would confirm Communist propaganda, and would be opposed.

(U) Similar conclusions are drawn about the Polish and Czechoslovak armies. The study does not assess the reliability of the PPA in short conflict but expresses doubts "that the Polish Army would be a reliable military force in conducting offensive actions of long duration against the West." It foresees vigorous opposition to any incursion into Poland from the West, and "localized, occasionally intensive" military resistance to a Soviet invasion of Poland. The study estimates that the CPA would be "coerced to engage in operations against West Germany in a Warsaw Pact offensive" until setbacks occurred or the absence of a West

⁶ (U) USAREUR, *Non-Soviet Warsaw Pact Reliability--Northern Tier* (U), December 1972 (originally Secret; declassified--not reviewed for public release).

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German invasion threat became evident. But a Western invasion of Czechoslovakia would meet with strong resistance.

☐ A 1982 U.S. Army study⁷ focused primarily on non-military sectors drew roughly the same conclusions regarding Polish reliability:

It is generally believed that a conflict of short duration would probably be supported by Poland. But if a long, protracted conflict were to develop, especially [one in which] Poland began to suffer huge losses, [or] one directed against a country not recognized by Poland as an aggressor, Poland's military reliability would be lessened.

☐ The study concludes that reliability would be diminished if Polish units had to fight far from Poland and if Poles perceived no immediate threat to their homeland.

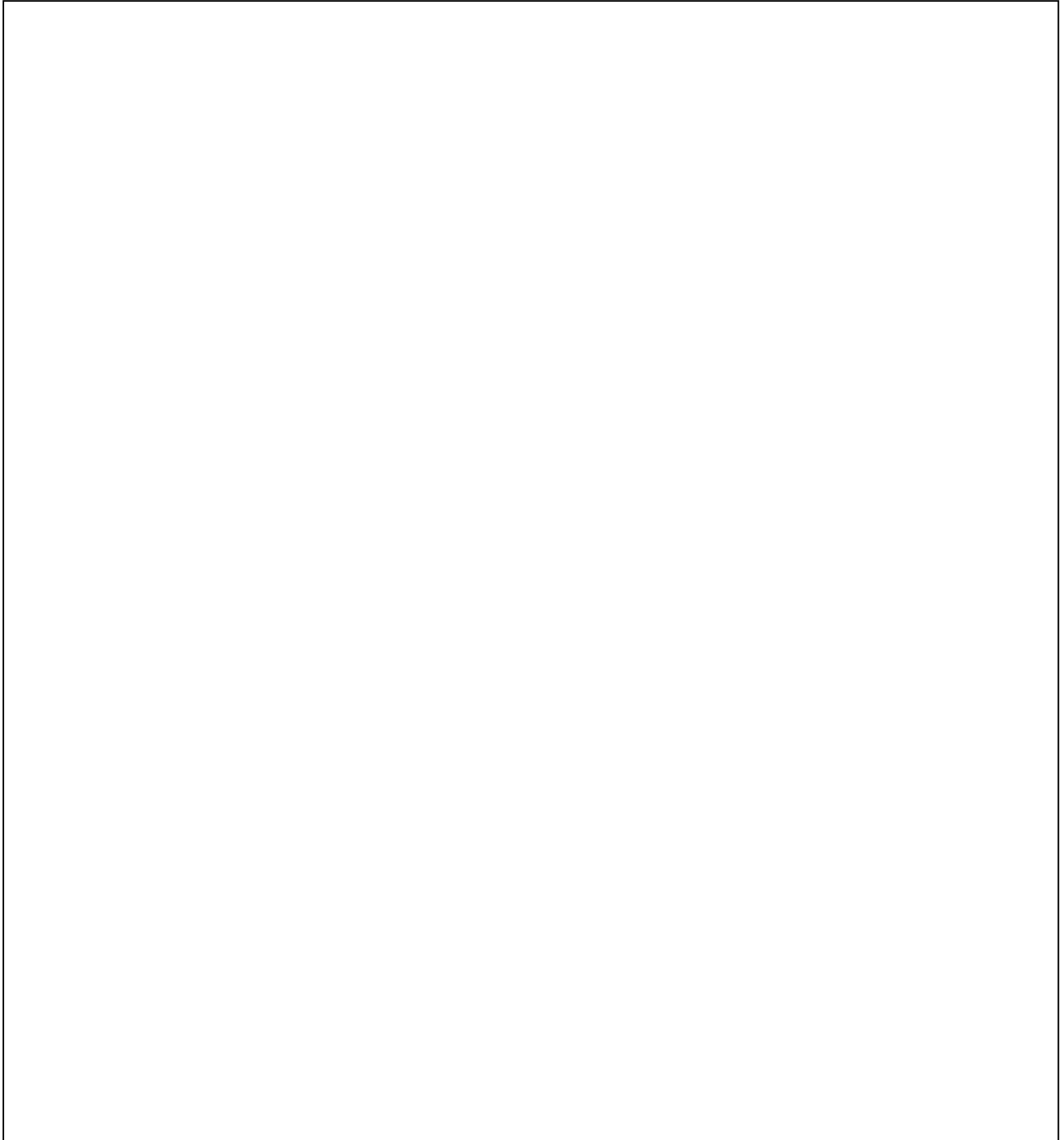
(U) Our emigre-based assessment of NSWP reliability is generally in line with this analysis, providing empirical support for the conclusions and qualifying them. The 1972 Army study pointed to a number of frictions within the NPA that threatened reliability, including NCO-officer conflict, lack of ideological commitment, and lack of GDR patriotism. It stressed the negative impact on the PPA of involvement in the 1968 invasion of Czechoslovakia and the suppression of the Gdansk unrest of 1970, the lack of ideological commitment, and officer-NCO frictions. Our interviews suggest that these problems have worsened since the early 1970s and thus constitute even more significant challenges to reliability today.

⁷ (U) USAREUR, *Poland, A Reliability Study* (U), April 1982 (Secret).

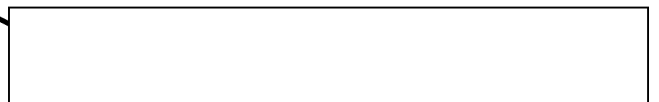
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(U) IMPLICATIONS FOR NATO POLICY

(U) Neither Western studies of the Warsaw Pact (classified and unclassified) nor available USG defector debriefings dealing with NSWP armed forces discuss specific Western policies as a variable that could affect the relative degree of NSWP reliability in a Warsaw Pact conflict with NATO. American officials and specialists have recently called for explicit attention to possible Western policies that could have that effect.¹⁰

(U) It was not within the scope of the present study to consider whether and how specific Western peacetime, crisis, or wartime policy measures might impact on East European military reliability. Nonetheless, our project interviews do contain testimony relevant to policy studies of this issue. These points are noted briefly below:

1. (U) The subject of Western influence on NSWP reliability has evidently received little or no thought by NSWP servicemen. No respondent initiated a discussion of this issue.
2. (U) Some respondents do suggest, directly or indirectly, a number of features of a NATO-Warsaw Pact conflict that would affect their reliability and are potentially susceptible to Western influence: NSWP reliability will be lower against non-traditional enemies; it will be lower outside national territory and much higher in the case of combat on national territory; it

¹⁰ (U) Fred C. Ikle, Address to the Wehrkunde Conference, Munich, West Germany, DOD news release 86-86, March 2, 1986; Edward B. Atkeson, "The 'Fault Line' In the Warsaw Pact: Implications for NATO Strategy," *Orbis*, Spring 1986.

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will be reduced or will collapse in the event of a protracted conflict.

3. (U) Respondent testimony suggests that there is considerable unrealized potential for Western information sources, primarily radio broadcasting, to affect the outlook and reliability of NSWP soldiers, in peacetime as well as in crises.¹¹ Western information could reduce their sense of a NATO threat to their own countries by making it clearer that NATO is not a mirror-image of the Warsaw Pact and that, operationally as well as politically, it does not threaten Eastern Europe. Western information could illuminate the aggressive, offensive, and anti-national character of a Soviet offensive in which NSWP armies would be involved and, in large measure, sacrificed as cannon fodder. Western media could provide East Europeans with a more realistic picture of the military balance in Europe.

4. (U) Respondent testimony suggests constraints that Western policy measures aimed at enhancing Soviet-East European frictions would have to overcome to be effective. These include a perception of Soviet stake and power, and American distance and relative disinterest; historical memory of Western lack of support for East European independence in the past; and the difficulty of offering credible Western incentives for NSWP military passivity

¹¹ (U) To the best of our knowledge, there have been no Western radio broadcasts "targeted" on the NSWP armies since West Germany ended its broadcasts to the NPA in the 1960s. Western broadcasting includes very few programs on Warsaw Pact military affairs in general.

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on such matters as personal safe conduct and ability to differentiate Soviet from NSWP forces on NSWP territory.

(U) Future studies of Western policy measures designed to affect NSWP reliability through rewards or punishments should benefit from more systematic "testing" of the effects these policies would have on NSWP servicemen.

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